

**University of Puget Sound  
Communication Response Protocol for  
Incidents of Bias or Hate\***

Response Protocol to Bias-Hate Incidents  
University of Puget Sound

**Preamble**

University of Puget Sound's educational mission in the liberal arts embraces a commitment to the considered, critical, and open engagement of ranging ideas, with one another, across our commonalities and differences, both social and individual. Hallmarks of such an ethos and ethic of knowing and interacting at Puget Sound are that each person is able to learn, teach, work, serve and lead in an environment which fosters in-depth and diverse knowledge of self and others, mutual respect, civic trust and social responsibility. Upon freely entering the campus community, each person commits to Puget Sound's values and mission and to respect every other member.\* Prejudiced and hateful conduct creates harmful ruptures in this educational and social contract that we have with one another and as an institution. Thus, the prevention of bias-hate incidents through education and the continual renewal of a just, safe and caring campus community are long-range objectives for Puget Sound. In the interim, as part of the process of liberal arts education, all campus members – leaders, targeted members, and allies – have a responsibility to respond to harmful incidents quickly and effectively in order to ensure the safety and well-being of targeted individuals and groups, re-establish clear norms that deter future incidents, and mend ruptures of civic trust.

Hate crimes are illegal and subject to prosecution. Many incidents involving bias or hate do not rise to that level. Yet harm occurs even when the responsible parties acted unintentionally, from ignorance, without hate or hostility, or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Anonymous acts of bias may be experienced by members of targeted groups as more isolating than when parties claim ownership of their deeds. Being a member of the Puget Sound community involves an openness to learn from one's mistakes, a commitment to end one's ignorance, and the courage to acknowledge and apologize for any unintended harm.

Bias-hate incidents always occur in a context. Each of us experiences Puget Sound from a distinct position, shaped by our histories and cultures. As a result, our sense of the impact and injury caused by an incident can differ. Thus, fully supporting our campus colleagues frequently requires a sincere effort to imagine and understand the experiences of those targeted by the incident. Words and actions that minimize the significance of bias-hate incidents can increase the sense of danger and alienation evoked by bias-hate incidents.

As a fundamental commitment and as part of the progress we envision, the Puget Sound community protects academic freedom, the open exchange of ideas and creative, intellectual expression. Freedom of expression on this campus means equally that we shall not seek to limit individuals' First Amendment right to express their views and that we shall reject conduct that hinders in any way the right of all to pursue their educational goals in a safe and respectful environment. We understand that these freedoms and rights do not permit us to tolerate speech, symbols, or other actions that are wounding or threaten harm to specific individuals or groups because destructive hostility has no place in open and honest learning.

The following protocol provides a guide to the responsibilities of offices, groups, and individuals for the coordination of prompt and effective response to bias and hate incidents. Each incident is unique and requires a response tailored to its circumstance. The immediate response by campus leaders is meant to serve the broader goal of enabling all members of the campus community to understand themselves as responsible for the creation of a campus that is welcoming, just, safe,

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and respectful of the intrinsic worth of all who work and study here. This protocol affirms the university's commitment to effectively respond to free speech and actions that conflict with our institutional mission and values, supporting those adversely affected by such misconduct, mobilizing allies, holding accountable those responsible under existing policies, and providing educational opportunities to question or avert future incidents of bias-hate.

*August 24, 2010*

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\* Puget Sound prohibits discrimination in education or employment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, disability, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, veteran or military status, gender identity or any characteristic that is legally protected under applicable local, state or federal law. See also the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Sexual Misconduct; the Code of Conduct; the Student Integrity Code; the Faculty Code; the Staff Policies and Procedures; the goals and purposes of the Bias-Hate Education Response Team; and the University Diversity Strategic Plan. This protocol does not provide a substitute procedure for redressing any person's legal rights, or create legal rights separate from applicable laws. Additionally, the university is not prevented by this protocol from acting to remedy a problem that could also be remedied by resort to legal action.

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**When any member of the Puget Sound community discovers or experiences an incident of bias or hate, it needs to be reported to Security at Ext. 3311 or to the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) at [chiefdiversity@pugetsound.edu](mailto:chiefdiversity@pugetsound.edu) or Ext. 3991**

The Chief Diversity Officer will work with campus community groups in the following ways depending on the type of incident:

**CDO immediately coordinates communications about the incident to inform the campus community with**  
 President  
 Academic VP, VP Student Affairs  
 Associate VP for Human Resources  
 Executive Director of Communications

President and Cabinet, Security

- Analyze what occurred
- Communicate to targeted population(s), leaders, allies
- Communicate to campus

**Coordinate Swift Action Steps based on Response Protocol**

- Bias-Hate Educational Response Team (BERT) representatives:**  
 Chief Diversity Officer, Co-chair  
 Associate Dean of Students, Co-chair  
 ASUPS Representative  
 Campus community at-large representatives  
 Director of Multicultural Student Services  
 Director of Security Services  
 Facilities Representative  
 Faculty Diversity Committee Representatives  
 Human Resources Representative  
 President's Office Representative  
 Staff Senate Representative  
 University Chaplain
- Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) members represent the following areas:**  
 Admission  
 ASUPS  
 At-Large Members (2)  
 Faculty Diversity Committee  
 Human Resources  
 Multicultural Student Services  
 Race and Pedagogy Initiative  
 Spirituality, Service & Social Justice  
 Staff Senate
- Academic Departments (examples)**  
 African American Studies  
 Asian Studies  
 Gender Studies  
 Latin American Studies

**Formal processes to adjudicate campus community violations for students, faculty and staff.**  
 Campus Code of Conduct  
 Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment Sexual Misconduct  
 Faculty Code  
 Harassment Officers  
 Student Integrity Code  
 Staff Policies and Procedures

**Bias-Hate Educational Response Team (BERT)**  
 Academic Programs  
 Director of Residence Life  
 Diversity Advisory Council  
 ASUPS Leadership

Assess incident and determine educationally how to respond to the campus community.

Reiterate formal campus adjudicatory processes.

Monitor outcomes to determine if further educational response is appropriate and prepare annual report.

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**Protocol for Campus Communication and Response to Incidents of Hate or Bias**

Purpose: The purpose of this protocol is to guide administrative response to hurtful acts – whether verbal or behavioral, whether based in prejudicial bias or hate – that undermine our objective of sustaining a campus environment that welcomes a diverse student body, faculty and staff.

- I. Response team: Who are the people who need to know about the incident immediately? Discussion should include the Chief Diversity Officer, President, Executive Director of Communications; VP for Student Affairs and Associate Dean of Students, if the incident involves or affects students; Academic VP, if the incident involves or affects faculty; Associate Vice President for Human Resources/Career and Employment Services and divisional vice-president, if the incident involves or affects staff members, including student staff members; Director of Security Services; and the University counsel, as recommended by the President.
- II. Concurrent referral formal processes to adjudicate campus community violations for students, faculty and staff.\*
- III. Analysis of the incident
  - A. What happened?
    1. What is the nature of the act?
    2. Who observed or perceived the act? What was their response?
    3. What immediate follow-up was taken by the university in response to the act? By whom?
  - B. What is known about intention of the actors(s)?
    1. Is the actor (or actors) known?
    2. Based on available information, is it more likely that the act was done intentionally or unintentionally?
    3. Is this an instance of hate crime?
    4. Is there recourse through the Student Integrity Code or other university policies for the hurtful act?
- IV. Assessment of impact
  - A. Affected populations
    1. Who are the students or student groups (and/or faculty and staff) most directly impacted by this act? What support do they need?
    2. Who are the leaders or student contact persons for these groups?
    3. Are there faculty and/or staff members who are program heads, advisers or mentors who have an interest in response to and/or resolution of this matter?
    4. Are there off-campus constituencies to be considered in this situation?
  - B. Nature of trauma or crisis
    1. To what degree has this act created a rupture in the campus community? What is the nature of that rupture?
    2. To what degree will publicity regarding this act create a rupture in the campus community?
    3. Is there any historical context that needs to be taken into account?
    4. What are the relevant emotions at play in this situation? Anger? Frustration? Concern for safety? Embarrassment? Confusion? Mistrust?

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5. What impact will this act have if observed by, or publicized among, members of the broader Tacoma community?
  6. If a photograph or story appeared in the News Tribune, what do we need to be prepared to say?
- V. Action steps
- A. Record what occurred
    1. Write a description of events.
    2. Review the description to insure that it is an accurate record of confirmed information. If some details cannot be confirmed immediately (e.g., the matter is still under investigation), what will be the impact of presenting qualified assertions?
    3. Summarize what is known about the actors' intentions and determine what, if anything can be said in terms of formal recourse within boundaries of the confidentiality of campus conduct/grievance procedures.
  - B. Analyze proposed university responses
    1. What is the appropriate immediate response for the population(s) affected and/or the campus as a whole?
    2. A formal statement may be an important initial response. This might be a statement of apology, affirmation of the affected population(s), statement of solidarity, acknowledgement of pain, etc. If a formal statement is appropriate, consider the proportion of the response with respect to the proportion of the act.
      - a) If the act was directed at a limited group and/or contained within a limited geography, a written statement of apology and affirmation to a limited population (e.g., residents of a particular hall, members of a particular student organization) may be a sufficient response.
      - b) If the act was performed during a campus-wide event, or not contained within a limited geography, a campus-wide message may be necessary.
      - c) Consider who should sign off on the message, what form of distribution is most appropriate, and to whom and from whom should the message be sent.
      - d) Remember that it may be useful to explain why a formal university response is an important action step, particularly if grounded in university mission, educational goals and diversity objectives.
      - e) A reasonable effort should be made to contact campus leaders (students, faculty and/or staff) to notify them of the act and a forthcoming response.
        1. It may be that timeliness of the message may preclude contacting all potential leaders.
        2. The purpose of the contact is explanation and consultation, not group editing or group approval of a message.
      - f) The Trail editor should be contacted in order to provide a heads-up regarding the forthcoming message and to provide contextual information.
      - g) What additional follow-up communication may be needed?

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3. What other actions may be useful or appropriate in the short-term?  
considering the factors:
  - a) Bias incidents and hate crimes can divide communities.  
Consider how actions of response can pull people together.
  - b) It is important for people to speak out against bigotry and hate.  
Consider how actions of response can allow opportunities for speaking out.
  - c) It is important to distinguish between a hate crime or a bias incident. The former is a matter for police participation; the latter is a matter for campus policy response.
  - d) It is important to prepare to work with the media. The Executive Director of Communication should serve as spokesperson and contact person for media.